

seems too like a silk-gloved hand clasping a
woollen one.
And yet, after reading a piece like *Flirtation: A
Dialogue*,
the wonder is rather where this blunt
parson acquired
such malicious lightness of touch. This piece is
a conversation
between a young lady, who has not
been precisely
a Penelope, and her confidante, pending
the return of
her betrothed Ulysses; and its disquisition on
the Art of
Weeping makes a pretty pendant to that on
the Art of
Swooning or Running Mad in Jane Austen's
*Love and
Freindship*:

To touch him nearer, and to hold him fast,
Have a few tears *in petto* at the last;
But this with care! For 'tis a point of
doubt,
If you should end with weeping or without.
'Tis true you much affect him by your pain,
But he may want to prove his power again;
And then, it spoils the look, and hurts the
eyes—
(A girl is never handsome when she cries.)
Take it for granted, in a general way,
The more you weep for men, the more you
may.
Save your resources; for though now you
cry
With good effect, you may not by and by.
It is a knack; and there are those that weep
Without emotion, that a man may sleep;
Others disgust—'tis genius, not advice,
That will avail us in a thing so nice.

But, alas, these silken nets are spread in vain
—all ends
with the arrival of a letter announcing that
the errant
Ulysses has himself succumbed in marriage
to a Circe in
Guernsey. It is worth noting what a way
the couplet
has of begetting wit; imagine the above in
blank verse,
or recall die mountainous gambols of *The
Prelude*. Not
that Crabbe cannot be atrocious; only, when

a writer
shows such conscious humour, it is hard to
be sure how
far the humour is unconscious even when he
writes: